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HINTS FOR CAMPERS IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS



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HINTS FOR CAMPERS IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS

Vacation time! And where are you going on your summer outing? Camping, perhaps? Maybe you will visit one of the national forests of the California Region (California and southwestern Nevada). These great public playgrounds extend an invitation and an opportunity. They cover the larger part of the southern Cascades, Sierra Nevada, and Coast Ranges. They offer vacationists all forms of outdoor enjoyment and sport.

National forests are free to everyone. The few simple rules that visitors are required to observe are for their own safety and the protection of the valuable forest resources. Ask the forest ranger about the fire and other special regulations of the forest in which you are going to spend your vacation.

Modern highways traverse all the 18 national forests of the California Region, and from the end



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of the road trails lead into the wilderness area of the high mountain country. Hotels, resorts, and motoring service are to be found throughout the forests.

The national forests offer attractive camping places, fine fishing streams and lakes, and good hunting grounds. Horseback riding, hiking, swimming, boating, and photography are popular summer activities. Free public campgrounds are available in all national forests. Hunting and fishing are subject to State fish and game laws.

An enjoyable vacation in the mountains requires some experience and knowledge of good woodsman-ship. Many a camping, fishing, or hunting trip has been spoiled by faulty equipment, insects and poisonous plants, or carelessness with fire. The following general hints are based on the experience of Forest Service officers and will be helpful to visitors:

Equipment

Take along a good bed. You can't enjoy your vacation unless you sleep well. An air bed or kapok mattress and warm blankets or quilts are best. If the nights are cold, the ground is much warmer to sleep on than a folding cot.

A tent is not essential in California during the summer, unless you plan a long stay at one place or an extended trip into the high country. A good canvas tarpaulin is recommended for use as a bed sheet or for protection against storms.

For cooking, a 2- or 3-burner gasoline stove is preferable to an open fire, as it does not blacken the

pots and pans and is less likely to start a forest fire. Carry plenty of dry matches in a corked bottle or tin can, and don't forget to take a flashlight and extra batteries. A gasoline lantern is the best night light for camp.

A shovel and ax are very useful tools on a mountain trip, and all campers must have them before they can secure a free campfire permit or build a campfire in the national forests of the California Region. Get a good 8-inch-blade shovel with a 36-inch handle, and a 2- or 3-pound ax with a 26-inch handle. A 20-foot length of rope is a handy thing to have around camp for putting up a tarpaulin or dragging in firewood.



Camping and Campfires

In the improved campgrounds throughout the national forests of the California Region, pure water, tables, stoves, fireplaces, garbage pits, and sanitary conveniences are provided for the use of visitors. Camp rules are posted on the bulletin boards in the camps. In some of the national forests, particularly

in southern California, all-camping is restricted to posted campgrounds and open fires are not permitted, because of the high fire hazard.

The following hints are for vacationists camping in the high country, or in national forests where camping is permitted at points other than in improved campgrounds:

Camping Rules

Leave a clean camp—the next fellow will appreciate this courtesy. Burn all your papers, rags, and cartons in the campfire, and dig a hole and bury your tin cans and bottles or place them in receptacles or garbage pits when these are available.

Be careful not to pollute springs, streams, and lakes by insanitary acts. Many of our mountain streams are the source of water supply for cities and towns in the valley regions.

If you build an open fire for cooking, first shovel away all needles and ground litter, down to mineral soil, from a space 10 feet in diameter around the fireplace. Then dig a hole and line it with rocks and in it build a small quick-burning fire. Be careful not to build your fire near green brush or timber, or close to down rotten logs.

Do your cooking over a small fire of coals, not over a bonfire that fills your eyes and lungs with smoke and your food with ashes. A cast-iron Dutch oven is the best all-round utensil yet invented for general baking and for cooking meat. Any old-timer or packer will tell you how to use such an oven.

To start a fire in wet weather one must find dry wood. Go to the nearest heavy stand of timber

and gather the small dead branches, about the thickness of a lead pencil or larger, that grow close to the trunks of the trees, and use these for kindling. Dry wood can also be found in small dead standing trees which should be felled, split open, and the center used for fuel.

Don't forget that you must secure a campfire permit before building any fire on national-forest land, including fires in stoves burning gasoline, kerosene, or wood. This regulation also applies to fires in stoves in auto trailers. Permits are issued free of charge by Forest Service officers and authorized agents.



Care with Fire

The true mark of a Good Woodsman is the care he uses with fire when in fields and forests. It is just as important to be careful with fire out of doors as it is in your own home.

Smokers are the principal cause of forest and chaparral fires started by human carelessness.

In the California Region, during the hot dry summer season, smoking is prohibited in all national forests, except at places of habitation, in special posted areas known as "fag stations," and in the high country above 7,800 feet elevation.

Campfires left burning may also cause serious forest fires.

The following simple rules will help prevent such disasters:

1. Break your match in two after using it. Never throw it away carelessly, but hold it in your hand until you are sure it is dead out. Experienced woodsmen usually put the burned match back in the box, or in their pocket.
2. Lighted cigarettes, cigar butts, and pipe heels should never be thrown on the dry forest floor. Play safe by clearing a little space down to mineral soil, and then grind out the fire with your foot.
3. Campfires, other than those in camp stoves, should be extinguished with a plentiful supply of water and mineral earth. Soak the burning embers while stirring them with a shovel or stick, until you are sure every spark is dead. Make doubly sure by feeling among the coals with your bare hand. Then cover the dead coals with earth.
4. Never leave your campfire unattended even for a short time. Many a camper has lost his whole outfit through such carelessness, as well as started a serious fire.



Insects and Poisonous Plants

Among the troubles that beset vacationists in the mountains are those caused by insects and poisonous plants. Learn to recognize and avoid these pests.

Mosquitoes. If you go camping in the mosquito season, set up your tent where the wind can reach it. Keep away from wet meadows, stagnant water, and the shores of lakes and streams. A good smudge will often give temporary relief. If you are sensitive to mosquito bites, wear a broad-brimmed hat and a head net made of bobbinet, with a pucker string to draw it around your neck. Wear gloves on your hands. There are many insect repellents which you can buy at any drug store. One of the most efficient home remedies is made of 1 part oil of citronella, 1 part spirits of camphor, $\frac{1}{2}$ part oil of cedar, and a little olive oil.

Wood ticks. Wood ticks are common in the spring in chaparral and foothill country. The U. S. Public Health Service considers all ticks dangerous. In

certain parts of California and Nevada, a species known as the Rocky Mountain wood tick carries a dangerous disease called "spotted fever." Ordinary wood ticks are flat, round, reddish-brown and about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch in diameter, with eight legs. If a tick is found on the body, remove it with a pair of tweezers or a small piece of cotton or paper. Be careful not to crush the tick because the "juice" can be dangerous. Make sure that no mouth parts are left in the wound. Swab the bitten spot with iodine or strong antiseptic, and disinfect the forceps and your fingers. Kill the tick by dropping it in kerosene or gasoline, or on top of a hot stove.

Poison oak. This is a bad offender of mankind in California, and causes small white blisters that spread rapidly and itch. Poison oak is a woody plant with leaves in groups of three, irregular, wedge shaped, dark green in summer, turning a deep red in the fall. If you find that you have contacted poison oak, wash the exposed skin promptly with gasoline, kerosene, or strong laundry soap. Do not use water alone. Both internal preventatives and external remedies are available at drug stores.

Snakes

Rattlesnakes are poisonous reptiles but no one need hesitate about going into the mountains for recreation on their account. Millions of persons camp, hike, hunt, and fish each year in the national forests of California, yet a rattlesnake bite is a rarity and any serious injury from them is rarer still. Like other wild things, they seek to avoid man if given a chance to get away.

Here are a few rules for emergency treatment of rattlesnake bites, given by physicians who are authorities on the subject, which forest rangers say are well worth remembering:

1. Keep cool. Don't run or get overheated.
2. Apply a tourniquet (rubber garter, rubber tubing or band, handkerchief, cord, shoe-string) a few inches above the wound and between the wound and the heart. Bind the limb tight enough to hinder circulation in the veins, but not tight enough to shut off arterial flow. Loosen the tourniquet every 15 or 20 minutes for 1 to 3 minutes.
3. Open the fang punctures by cross-cuts one-eighth inch deep and one-fourth inch or more long, made with a sharp, sterile knife or safety-razor blade. Do not slash indiscriminately or too deeply especially on hand, foot, wrist, or ankle, as serious damage to tendons may result.
4. Suck the wound, by mouth if necessary. If suction bulb is available, apply mechanical suction for 20 minutes out of each hour.
5. Get the patient to a physician as soon as possible.

What to Do When Lost

Many a fine camping trip has been utterly ruined by some member of the party getting lost in the mountains.

If you think you are lost, don't run around and yell at the top of your voice, because loss of mental control is more serious than lack of food, water, or

clothing. Keep cool, and the chances are you will come out of the woods on your own feet.

Read the following helpful rules carefully:

1. Stop, sit down, and try to figure out where you are. Use your head, not your legs.
2. If caught by night, fog, or storm, stop at once and make camp until daylight in a sheltered spot. If the nights are cold, build a warming fire in a safe place, and gather dry fuel for use during the night.
3. Don't wander around. Travel only down hill. Follow streams or ridges that lead down into the valleys.
4. If injured, choose a cleared spot on top of a hill or rocky point and make a signal smoke with green leaves and branches. The fire lookout men or the pilots of airplanes may see the smoke.
5. The standard distress signal is three quickly repeated calls (Voice, whistle, gun shots, flashing lights, puffs of smoke, etc.) and the answering signal two calls.
6. Don't yell, don't run, don't worry, and above all DON'T QUIT.



Have a Grand Vacation—and Come Again Soon



